

Abide in the Old Ruts.

BY C. H. BALSBAUGH.

"The Ancient of Days," is also the Infant of Days. The ever-old is the ever-new. Evolution, not one from another, but all from One, is the law of the universe. He who distinctively announces Himself as "I am," also says, "I am the Way." The ruts of to-day are the ruts of eternity. "I change not"—"from everlasting to everlasting God." "The Lord our God is one Lord," and his law one. His manifestations are manifold, but like a thread through a handful of beads, one principle runs through every atom and being. God is love, and love is law, and law is inexorable. God is necessarily greater than His manifestations, hence miracles are only a nearer and more direct revelation of God than the ordinary course of nature. The stars shine only in the night; then eclipse, by the effulgence of the sun, is not their annihilation. The overshadowing of the Highest in extraordinary manifestations does not put the slightest check on natural law. God abides in the essential ruts of His being no matter in what form He makes His presence and power known.

The revelations of God are not only consecutive but organic. There is no more breach in the universe, from first to last, than in the history of a stalk of wheat from its germination to its maturity. The wheels of God are very high and dreadful; they are instinct with the Spirit of the four mystical living creatures of Jehovah, and they roll onward as the Spirit prompts. Ezekiel 1. These ruts are safe to follow. To miss them is death. Adam and Eve were placed in full accord with the Divine will and purpose, but the devil jerked them away. He was busy in Heaven before "perverting the right ways of the Lord," and he has been busy on earth ever since. He holds grim festival to-day among the children of Belial, and special heyday in Christendom. He has ruts of his own that run counter to the awful chariot of the Eternal Sovereign. He glories to drive athwart divine institutions and appointments. He overlooks not littles. If he can drag the princes of the congregation into perdition by inciting them to ignore the authority and significance of fringes on their garments as reminders that God makes the rut for every wheel on earth, he is content. Num. 15, 16.

When God says "a ribbon of blue," He means a ribbon of blue. He that smells at the composition for the golden altar is doomed to destruction. To offer "strange fire" on the brazen altar is to be consumed by the fierce flames of Divine wrath. To dispute with Jehovah is to side with the devil. The Divine wisdom and power and authority are absolute. God swerves not an iota from the law of His own being. He is love, and His forbearance and longsuffering are marvellous. But violated law must find redress somewhere. Jesus sums up all loyalty and all retribution. What then? Shall we sin that grace may abound? God forbid. The law was not relaxed by the Divine-human propitiation, but honored and reaffirmed. To live as we list because we are not under law but under grace, leaves nothing but "a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries." The Incarnation is the *chef d'oeuvre* of Jehovah. It is the consummation of his eternal purpose. Eph. 3: 11. In Him the rut runs round the world, and becomes luminous with the glory of Godhead. Only fools miss it. "Look unto me," means be as I am. The law of eternity is the law of time. "We shall see Him and be like Him," is the beatific vision and its effects for both worlds. "Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven." Do we believe it? Where is the evidence? "Be not deceived, God is not mocked." "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is not His." "Learn of Me, I am meek and lowly in heart." "Return not evil for evil, but overcome evil with good." So did God in Christ. This is the old rut in which all true Christians are found. The final judgment is committed to the Son of Man, and His incarnate life among men is the soul ground of all decision and destiny. To come to Jesus is to step into His footprints. To abide in Him is to walk even as He also walked. 1 John 2: 6. The death of self is the absolute condition of eternal life. Heart and

mind, tongue and pen, hand and foot, eye and ear, must get their temper and tone and function and energy from the cross. "He that is able to receive it, let him receive it." "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." Abide in the old ruts.

Parvum in Multo.

BY NOSAM.

Letters addressed "Care of Evangelist office," Ashland, Ohio, will be promptly forwarded to me. Indeed, I would be very glad to open a correspondence with any of the brethren upon any topic that will be of mutual benefit. Remarks concerning anything said under this heading, are in order. They can be made publicly or privately, and will receive immediate attention.

If my remarks on the Hymnody in a late number, will be the means of bringing forth an edition of "words only," it will be a boon to the brotherhood. The present way of supplying our congregations with singing books is too expensive to be thorough and practical. Let us have books so that we can be able to treat those who come to worship with us, with some degree of courtesy, by offering them a hymn book. By treating them in this way we may induce them to come again.

I know that the advertisement of certain articles is sent to our papers under such names and with such notices, that the editor and readers are often deceived. This is the case with the book lately advertised in the EVANGELIST, under the title of "The Coming Creed." So that your readers may not be deceived by the title and notice, I will give you some of the leading features of the book. The motto on the title page gives the key to its character: "Is there not a faith more sublime and blissful than Christianity?" The author considers the Bible as the work of man, and therefore full of errors. He says Jesus was not divine, and that "there are no miracles, there never have been miracles, and there never can be miracles." He believes in nothing supernatural, and that Christianity is only a superstition and delirium. If he is not an infidel, indeed, I hardly know where to place him. He professes to believe in a God, prayer, morality, and in a continual progressive evolution after death until our spirits have "joined the great Spirit of the world, and has become one with it."

One of the great mysteries to me is, why a certain class of people are church members. They do not seem to be hypocrites; by that, I mean that they do not pretend a piety they do not feel. The fact is, they do not seem to have any faith in Christianity at all. If they have any they have a queer way of showing it. It is only when nothing else interferes that they will condescend to join the Lord's people in Christian worship. We find this class almost everywhere. I can hardly call it lukewarmness, it seems to partake of the temperature we experience when the thermometer is below freezing point. When there is anything attractive going on that causes a collision between religion and something else, religion is almost invariably sacrificed for the benefit of the something else. Brethren and sisters, let us make our Christian duty the great object of our life, and every thing subsequent to it.

My experience in church work is, that nearly all the great troubles and fusses that occur in the churches, may be traced to the preachers. This is a sad confession to make, but facts are facts. On that account I have relished Bro. Martin's short sermon to the preachers. I have known preachers that outside of the pulpit, we would need a strong spiritual microscope to discern any piety. When this is the case, what can we expect? This thing of excusing a minister's folly and inconsistency by saying they are only men, is not the best thing to do. Let every good Christian frown down and not excuse the inconsistencies of their ministers. We naturally expect more from our ministers than any one else; just as we expect more from a teacher than one of his scholars. The best way to teach is by example.

Does the editor of the COLLEGE RECORD published at the EVANGELIST office, intend his article

in the April number on "Spelling Reform," as a sample of what it will be under the change? If so then I cannot see that there will be much improvement. Take, for instance, such words as "languag," "kep," "spac," "chang" &c. Why should we have any difference in the pronunciation of chang and hang, complicat and democrat &c.? How are we to know when the vowel in such words as "tak" and "spac" is short or long unless the final e is there? And how about e in "kep"? Is there not danger of overdoing it? To mutilate knowledge into "noleg" seems to make it worse rather than better. Please let us have an explanation—or are they typographical errors, and these peculiar spellings the fault of the proof-reader?

We are told by those who profess to know all about it that there are many reptiles and insects that are able to go, and do go without food for months and even years. We are not able to vouch for the truthfulness of the foregoing, but we are sometimes astonished to see how long some professing Christians can go without spiritual food. It is no wonder that we have thin, puny starvings in the church, when they abstain from taking the food the Lord provides for the soul. To keep the soul healthy and strong our spiritual meals must be taken regularly.

Doing good to our fellowmen, is the distinctive mark of Christianity. It is this feature about it that makes it superior to any other religion. It is the great stress laid on this by the Lord, that makes the Bible superior to any other book. It is by this that the world judges the quality of a man's Christianity. Now, we lay great stress upon the ordinances we observe, and many of us believe our system of worship superior to that of any other denomination. Brethren, if this is so, let it be seen in our lives. If our lives are no better than any others, what good does the observance of the ordinances do us? Let the fruit of our lives be the great test. This kind of argument is unanswerable.

If we go to church, pray at stated times, sing hymns, wash feet, partake of the Lord's supper, merely as a matter of duty, and not of love, the effect upon the soul is very doubtful. The fact is, we are turned into a kind of a machine. It the observance of these formalities is the only mark of our Christianity, what better are we than those who make a certain form of dress their mark? Love must be the motive. Love will not stop merely at the observances of these institutions, but will go out with us into every avenue of life. Let us not forget love. Paul tells us what these things are worth without love in 1 Cor. : 13.

My plain remarks will no doubt cause some of your readers to suspect that I intend them as personal. Be it here known to all, that all that we have said and all that we mean to say is only personal to those whom it fits. We will have pretty straight feet if we cannot find some of these crooked shoes that will fit us. Do not carry the shoe to your neighbor's house, before you have tried it on your own foot. If they do fit you, get those ugly corns and bunions, that make the deformity, straightened out. Go to the great Physician, he alone can help you to get rid of the ugliness in your disposition and character.

Is Your Light Dim?

"Some years ago a steamer was coming up the Firth of Clyde on a stormy night. Careful watch was kept, and all was going well, till suddenly a dim, flickering light appeared right over her bows. In another instant the steamer went crashing into a ship which was lying at anchor. Several lives were lost, and much damage was done. What was the cause of the accident? The anchored ship had allowed her light to grow dim for want of oil. It was only neglected. This is like what many Christians do; they forget to read the Word, to meditate upon it, and to watch with prayer; therefore their light is almost out, to the injury of themselves and others."

"Ye are the light of the world." Christ's churches are golden candlesticks planted in a dark world. They are to hold forth the word of life. Oh, Christians, watch and pray, and see to it that your lamps are trimmed and burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord.—Ex.